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THE TEXAS COMMON CURRICULUM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: ITS
ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

by

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ABSTRACT

THE TEXAS COMMON CURRICULUM FOR HIGHER EDUCATION: ITS ORIGINS, DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

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The State of Texas started an educational endeavour called the Texas Common Curriculum in 1987 which was structured to ascertain and require that all graduates from Texas institutions of higher learning, who received a baccalaureate degree from a public college or university, would be required to successfully finish the state's general education Core curriculum within the components of their specific degree requirements. Over time changes were made to the curriculum initially on an institutional level and then on a state level. Designed, almost wholly, to allow for easy and free transferability between accredited institutions in Texas the Core curriculum has yet to actually satisfy this most basic of its foundational missions. The history of this process for educational reform mirrors changing times in the state, and nation. This is a descriptive study.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as an introduction to the research. This chapter details a brief history higher education in America and Texas. This chapter addresses the research questions as well as provides key definitions of terms used in the analysis. This chapter provides a foundational context for the research.

Early on in the history of American society and throughout the beginning of the 20th century, higher education was a means to prepare students for higher income positions or for positions in academia (Astin, 1993; Bok, 2006; Wang & Hurley, 2012). Though some scholars, notably John Dewey, posited that education was not a means, in and of itself into a future life, but that it was an integral component of the process of human life (Dewey & Small, 1897).

However, the post-WWII institutions of higher education have witnessed a greater emphasis on the acceptance, admission, retention, and eventual graduation of increasingly larger portions of the American populous attending college (Bok, 2006; Spangler & Tyler, 2011). This has, in turn, led to a significant percentage of students not prepared for college-level work who are nonetheless expected to be serviced by American institutions (Astin, 1993; Bok, 2006). This has also led to a growing number of colleges and universities offering certificates and degrees in more manual industries like cosmetology and manufacturing sciences (Bok, 2013; Li, 2008; Spangler & Tyler, 2011). As a result, the ideal of what a liberal education is has also drifted over this time (Bok, 2013; Dewey, 1916; Hook, 1949; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Spangler & Tyler, 2011). Liberal education in America has evolved through a major revolution in the

ideal function of the higher education institution, as the institutions have evolved so have the methods used to educate (Astin, 1993; Joseph, 2010; Spangler & Tyler, 2011).

At a time when colleges served mainly the upper echelons of intelligence and the exceptionally financially endowed there was little cause for assessment of learning (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009). However, now that higher education institutions are expected to serve the broader masses, assessment is critical to establish the continued relevance of the higher education institutions in America (Bok, 2013; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009).

The most troubling aspect of this crisis is the failure of faculty to recognize the nature of the events as the changes impact society in a larger context than the individual instructor's personal milieu (Bok, 2013; Project on Redefining, 1985). This failure may not be meritless as Katz (2010) notes, "U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings...support(s) outcome assessment...in the name of educational consumerism – they want assessment so that students and their parents can comparison shop" (para 2). As a result, many faculty members fight the implementation of assessment strategies within the administration of their individual institutions (Bok, 2006). In fact, the lack of assessment is so widespread that many departments don't even require graduating students to have completed a substantial research paper (Bok, 2006).

This lack of understanding on the part of the faculty and hence a lack of implementation of practical assessment strategies in higher education is leading to a devaluation of the college graduate in the minds of modern employers (Bok, 2013; Heston, 2012). This contention requires, of course, accepting that higher education

should develop graduates ready for employment. This is often an outcome at odds with the motivation of providing a liberal education.

Research Questions

From evaluating the breadth of the literature comprising the research area, it was easy to arrive at a plethora of questions. The first question centered on identifying the primary purpose for the initial development of legislation that was to become the core curriculum (TCC) in Texas Higher Education Institutions (HEI). Further, this study sought to determine the purpose of the TCC, as well as how the state mission to develop and perfect the TCC has been coordinated and implemented at both the university and community college level, currently and in the past. This was important because there is a gap in the literature, the study details the development of a core reform in higher education.

1. What was the primary purpose for the initial development of the core curriculum (TCC) in Texas higher education?
2. What was the primary mission for the initial development, and future iterations, of the TCC?
3. How was the TCC developed, coordinated and, implemented?

Definitions

Essential learning outcomes. (also, exemplary educational outcomes) – ideologies of higher education which are based on the historically significant belief that college study at the bachelor's level should serve to parlay the values inherent in a liberal democracy, serve as a catalyst for enlightened reasoning, and promote citizen

engagement in the community (Project on Redefining, 1985). In theory these outcomes parallel and identify what professors, former students and the local businesses maintain the student body will need to be effective in a changing and globalizing world.

(Association of American Colleges and Universities, n.d.).

Texas core curriculum (TCC). – Individual higher education institutions in Texas have their own core curriculum which applies to every degree earned from that institution. This is required by statutes from the Texas State Legislature via the Texas Education Code (Collin College, 2014; TGECWC, n.d.). Individual institutions in Texas follow a universal course numbering system and course alignment which is designed to allow for easy transfer to other institutions of higher education (Central Texas College, 2015; TGECWC, n.d.). The current organization with program control over the TCC is the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) (See Figure 1).

Core objectives. – As of 2013, the six core objectives of the TCC are; Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Empirical and Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility (Core Curriculum, 2013)

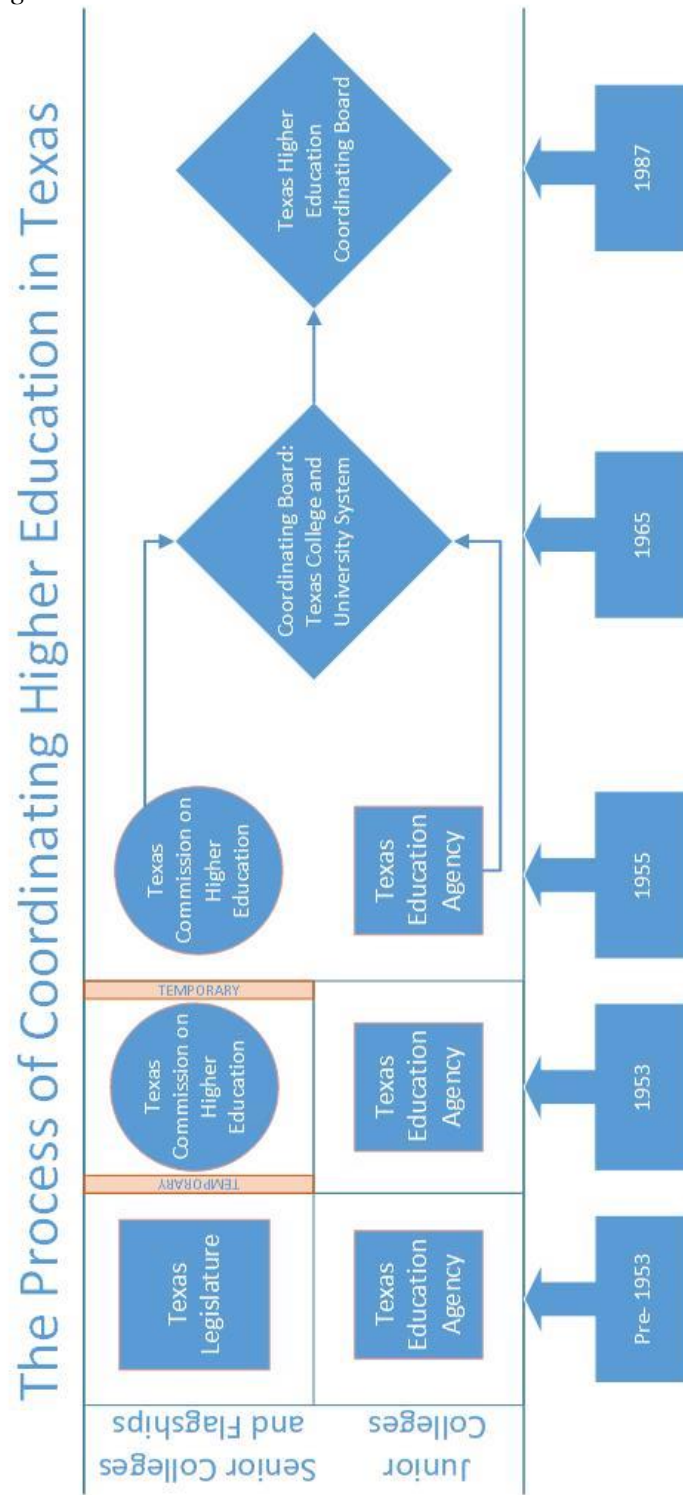
TAC. – Texas Administrative Code. Consists of formal rules and regulations pertaining to the State of Texas (Welcome to the Texas, n.d.).

LEAP TAC. Texas Assessment Collaborative. A program supported through Lumina Foundation funds and funds from the LEAP Texas program with a mission; “aimed at leveraging the newly redesigned Texas Core for the overall improvement in undergraduate education, advancing the authentic assessment of student work in the Texas Core, and promoting the development and refinement of the capacity of authentic

assessment of student work in the Texas Core” (King & Duke, 2017, p. 1). LEAP is a program created by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) (O’Sullivan, 2009). LEAP is an educational construct which considers process, adaptation and change as crucial to the continued relevance of higher education (O’Sullivan, 2009).

Junior College – junior college also considered a synonym of community college. Initially, in US society, junior colleges were chartered to prepare students for entry into senior institutions when these students might not have been qualified for enrollment immediately after high school (Dougherty, 1994). While, community colleges were often chartered to directly support the local community and thus were originally tied directly to the industry and business which often helped fund them (Dougherty, 1994).

Figure 1
Coordinating Texas Higher Education



This chapter served as an introduction to the research. This chapter detailed a brief history higher education in America and Texas. This chapter addressed the research questions as well as provided key definitions of terms used in the analysis. This chapter provided a foundational context for the research.

CHAPTER II: BACKGROUND

This chapter includes an examination of the crisis in the American higher education system and addresses the importance of assessing learning outcomes (LO), and the history of Texas Core Curriculum (TCC). Included is an examination of the TCC with other SACSCOC member institutions and how it relates to the national Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) vision.

Liberal Education

What is Liberal Education? Liberal education which is also sometimes referred to as Liberal arts education can be defined as a historically prevalent and prominent component of educational theory in the Western tradition, which draws connections with the idea of freedom (Chambliss, 1996; Joseph, 2010). This phrase is commonly used as a synonym for general education, or “the basics” but this is often inaccurate. The idea of a liberal education developed out of a society which had slaves, consider Athenian society, where-in slaves did the routine and mundane tasks and the main populace was educated for the “rights and duties of citizenship” (Harvard University, 1952, p. 52); therefore, their education didn't need to be vocational and it was based in the liberal arts. According to this tenet, “the freemen were trained in the reflective pursuit of the good life; their education was unspecialized as well as unvocational; its aim was to produce a rounded person with a full understanding of himself and of his place in society and the cosmos” (Harvard University, 1952, p. 52). In this sense liberal education would equate to *artes*

illiberales (O’Sullivan, 2009). For an institution to be considered to offer a liberal education it needs to increase the progress of humanity (Evans, 1942; Joseph, 2010). Dewey would define liberal education as a means for every participant to fully comprehend the significance of humanity found in his/her job or career (Dewey & McDermott, 1973; Roth, 2013). The Texas core curriculum

According to the Coordinating Board Rules Chapter 4 Subchapter B §4.28, “through the Texas Core Curriculum, students will gain a foundation of knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, develop principles of personal and social responsibility for living in a diverse world, and advance intellectual and practical skills that are essential for all learning.” This iteration of the TCC stressed attainment of a “foundation” of knowledge; implying a close tie to the early years of higher education.

The State of Texas started an educational endeavor called the TCC in 1987 which was structured to ascertain and require that all graduates from Texas institutions of higher learning who received a baccalaureate degree from a public college or university would be required to successfully finish the state’s general education core curriculum within the components of their specific degree requirements (THECB, n.d. a; THECB, n.d. b). According to the current THECB policies, “regardless of the student’s academic discipline or “major,” each student earning an undergraduate degree from a Texas public institution of higher education holds in common their completion of the Texas Core Curriculum” (THECB, n.d. b, para. 1).

At the time of this writing, the TCC had six core objectives which were analogous to those of the nationally targeted LEAP Program: Critical Thinking, Communication

Skills, Empirical & Quantitative Skills, Teamwork, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility (Williamson & Cherry, 2012). However, the TCC has changed over the past twenty-six years, and 2014 witnessed a new implementation of the TCC Program, including the previously mentioned core objectives as well as other adaptations (THECB, n.d. c; Williamson & Cherry, 2012).

Educational Reforms circa 1983

Accountability

Accountability at the higher educational level can be measured via the utilization of a varied group of methodologies and instruments (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007). According to Kuh (2001) college rankings became a component of pop culture in the last decade of the twentieth century. However, many administrators and faculty at these individual institutions found the rankings and specifically their methodologies to be lacking in rigor and robustness (Kuh, 2001; McClenney, 2007; Pike, 2006). This is mainly because they are considered to be, “too general...that is, the results do not suggest specific courses of action” (Pike, 2006, p. 550).

Merely claiming to have developed a policy of assessment is not enough; the call for more accountability in higher education will fail to bring about change if there is no set attainment of accomplishment (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). When considering the impacts of assessment, “what students learn, what faculty members create, and what public service postsecondary institutions render to society-these are the outcomes that matter” (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009, p. 5). The purpose of the assessment is to equate instruction and services across all pupils; this is also

evidence of an effective educational administrator. While in the 1990s the discussion over the students' benefits of higher education was being held at the institutional level, in today's world the public and policy makers are also joining in on the discussion (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh (2009) note that, "these 'essential learning outcomes' of higher education are rooted in the longstanding belief that baccalaureate study should reinforce the values of liberal democracies...they resonate with what educators, alumni, and business leaders believe students need to function effectively in a rapidly changing world" (p. 65).

Total Quality Management

The idea behind any performance indicator is to quantify some policy (Townley, Cooper & Oakes, 2003) According to Townley, Cooper & Oakes (2003) this design of quantification can be traced back to the Enlightenment and its peculiar discourses. An example of the type of discourse during the Enlightenment would be to consider Kant & Reiss (1991) wherein a facet of Kantian theory called the Transcendental Formula suggests that, "all actions affecting the rights of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is not compatible with their being made public" (p. 1046). This example from Kant would be an early conceptualization of accountability and its precepts which have evolved over the centuries into the postmodern drive for more transparent institutional accountability.

The impulse to incorporate aspects of the business model of total quality management into the educational realm is a result of the mission to assure service quality and this shift in the focus of higher education can be found globally as HEI across the

globe implement these measures (Mok, 1999; Zajda and Rust, 2016). Dewey (1916, pg. 98) added that “efficiency in production often demands division of labor.” However, if the students are unsuccessful in their attempts to marry the social, mechanical and academic components with their daily education, society has relegated their education to a mere routine function (Dewey, 1916). While changes in society, such as the move from Enlightenment thinking to the postmodern realm of globalization, have been noted previously in this study, it is pertinent here to examine one specific transition to higher education. Institutions of higher education, especially in the developed world outside of Europe, have seen in the latter half of the 20th century a shift from the acceptance of predominately elites within society to an expectation of mass education for all (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 1999; Birnbaum, 1975; Mok, 1999; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Rudolph & Thelin, 1990). When elites were the predominate population utilizing the higher education system, external controls were virtually non-existent (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 1999; Rudolph & Thelin, 1990). However, as institutions have begun to accept more and more people, the social controls within education have begun to erode and thus society has witnessed the external calls for accountability (Mok, 1999).

Institutional Response

Historical and Postmodern Scrutiny

Institutions of higher education have come under increasing external scrutiny in the postmodern world (Carriveau, 2010; Comeaux, 2005; Hu, Kuh, & Gayles, 2007; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; McCormick, Pike, Kuh, & Chen, 2009; Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Komives, 2011; Stensaker, 2008; Wang & Hurley, 2012). This scrutiny is

driven by changing ideologies regarding the mission and purpose of higher education as well as changes within society (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007; Barry, Chandler, & Clark, 2001; Blackmore, 2009; Comeaux, 2005; Kinzie, Gonyea, Shoup, & Kuh, 2008; Kuh, 2001; Kuh, 2009; Kuh, 2013; Mok, 1999; Wang & Hurley, 2012; Yob et al., 2016). Blackmore (2009) notes several examples of these changes, "...market pressures to meet industry and student demand, government pressures to meet professional standards, technological pressures to use online learning, and academic pressures to maintain international status in teaching and research" (p. 857). As clarity is the root result of quality assessment it is a fundamental component of the toolbox for educational administrators. The heralding of assessment in higher education is often not welcomed by the faculty at many institutions, seeing the assessment as a problem and therefore it becomes the administration's responsibility to drive this change in perception and move toward a universal acceptance of assessment as an integral component of higher education often via accreditation (Blackmore, 2009; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Kuh, 2001; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2011; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). Kuh and Ikenberry (2009) note that one of the findings from a Spring 2009 National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment (NILOA) reinforces this conundrum, "gaining faculty involvement and support remains a major challenge" (p. 7).

As noted further in this paper, assessment can be comprised of course level or institutional level analysis (Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Komives, 2011). Regardless of how assessment policy is developed and implemented on each campus, all parties need to accept the importance to successful education (Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Komives,

2011). When this acceptance is universal within the institution, this then allows a shared vision between the administration, staff members, and the faculty at educational institutions of the proper place and the justification of assessment at the specific higher education institution (Alfred, Shults, & Seybert, 2007; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009).

The Pensive Faculty

A component of a successful assessment system is an active and engaged faculty that serves to also systematically gather data on student mastery of learning objectives (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Pike, 2006; Wang & Hurley, 2012). Faculty members understanding of the importance and relevance of assessment is clearly fundamental to successful educational leadership and effective teaching. It is the faculty alone who must evaluate and, where appropriate, adjust their individual instructional methods (Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009). Faculty should then integrate results of their assessments into their curriculum as well as discuss these results with their peer faculty (Astin, 1993; Kuh & Ikenberry, 2009).

An interesting aspect of this crisis is the failure of the faculty to recognize the nature of the events (Allen, 2004; Astin, 1993; Bok, 2013; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Wang & Hurley, 2012). Wang & Hurley (2012) note that faculty may conclude that assessment procedures waste the time they have to focus on other activities that may lend more directly to academic success. However, the study they conducted concluded that motivation was the pivotal factor in faculty willingness to incorporate assessment. As a result, many faculty fight the implementation of assessment strategies

within the administration of their individual institutions (Astin, 1993; Bok, 2006; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Pike, 2006). In fact, the lack of assessment is so widespread that many departments don't even require graduating students to have completed a substantial research paper prior to completing classwork (Bok, 2006; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). This lack of understanding on the part of the faculty and hence an implementation of practical assessment strategies is leading to a devaluation of the college graduate in the minds of modern employers (Astin, 1993; Bok, 2013).

According to Bok (2013) in a survey conducted by the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) employers found less than 25% of employees qualified in writing and critical thinking (p. 180). However, according to Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh (2009) when instructors utilize effective teaching strategies their students will learn and become more engaged. As the individual student who matriculates through a Texas HEI begins to be employable in the minds of the employers looking to hire, the general perception that colleges are not preparing students for the real world will begin to be eroded. Society will socially reconstruct its perspective on the value of higher education.

Assessment

What is Assessment in Higher Education

Assessment is any effort to assemble, investigate and digest evidence gathered to reflect the effectiveness of the respective organization for this analysis an institution of higher education (Allen, 2004; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Comeaux, 2005; Miller, Linn, & Gronlund, 2013; Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Information from this investigation can then be

used by the institution to plan and, if necessary, redirect organizational efforts and strategies (Allen, 2004; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Komives, 2011). In practice, this development of assessment requires a spawning and growth of a culture of assessment accepted by the differing components of the institution (Wang & Hurley, 2012). While this research has adopted a clear precise definition of assessment, it is important to remember that assessment can also include such components as cost effectiveness, satisfaction of students, meeting the needs of students and incorporating professional standards (Schuh & Upcraft, 2001).

The Methods of Assessment

A general public acceptance is coalescing regarding the abilities which graduates of higher education institutions should possess, in other words society has developed a social construction of what higher education entails (Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Project on Redefining, 1985). These are commonly referred to as essential learning outcomes (ELO) or, more specifically in Texas, exemplary educational outcomes (Astin, 1993; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). Business uses performance indicators (PI) to refer to these outcomes.

Once these indicators for quality higher education are developed they become the foundation of the assessment process. Some form of measurement is utilized (be it test, essay or drawing) to mark how well students have integrated the material into their individual learning process. When Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh (2009) examined faculty focus on student indicators they found that the domain of individual and social responsibility was the most often ignored. Not only did faculty not accept many of the

indicators, the measures of accountability, but they rarely emphasized deep learning (Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009; Reason, Barefoot, & Kinzie, 2013; Wang & Hurley, 2012). Perhaps the one indicator commonly accepted by faculty would be collaboration, which often had high results (Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). Ideally, faculty would then assess several of the indicators on a rolling basis, which would provide both continued curriculum development as well as longitudinal data.

How Does Assessment Function in Texas?

The root requirement for assessment in institutions of higher education comes less from the common political culture and climate and more from regulation via the Texas Legislature and the organizations the TL created to govern Texas HEIs. There are multiple regulatory bodies which HEI in Texas must adhere to in order to maintain their accreditation. So, HEI assess learning outcomes to satisfy the goal of maintaining accreditation. This list includes; the Texas Legislature, US Dept. of Education, SACS, among others. For example, SACS standard 3.3.1 requires that “the institution identifies expected outcomes, assesses the extent to which it achieves these outcomes, and provides evidence of improvement based on analysis of the results in each of the following areas...” (Bledsoe, 2013, p. 3) The first component to be measured under SACS 3.3.1 is “educational programs, to include student learning outcomes” (Bledsoe, 2013, p. 3)

Summary

This chapter included a discussion of the crisis of the American higher education system as the definition of liberal education morphed over the 20th century. The chapter detailed the growing importance of assessing learning outcomes to measure and quantify

achievement of learning. The chapter also focused on developments in the State of Texas leading to the introduction and evolution of the core curriculum in Texas.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides detailed information concerning the selection of a research methodology, the collection of primary and secondary sources, and the investigation process used in an examination of the TCC. The focus of this chapter will be on the state expectations rather than individualized institutional responses.

Purpose of the Study

The study employed an historical research methodology using document retrieval, interviews and database investigation.

Scope

This study was limited in that it did not examine all state level policies of assessment in higher education institutions. The study was limited in that it did not discern any significant variations which may exist in regards to implementation within the State of Texas by various public higher education institutions.

The delimitations of this study are the focus on the State of Texas implementation of the Core curriculum. The study did not pursue an exhaustive comparison with other state level implementations.

Research Design

Methods of academic research can be thought of and viewed as a progression from basic research to applied research (Schoenfeld, 1999). Seen in this way, basic research is a foundational strategy that can eventually generate applied research (Schoenfeld, 1999). Historical case study research fits well into the basic research frame but is designed to firstly elucidate the subject being investigated and secondly to assist

future decision making (Travers, 1978). Historical case study methodology will be utilized.

Historical research has a unique identifier as compared to other forms of research, be they quantitative or qualitative, in that it is primarily concentrated on analysis and reconstruction of the past (Borg & Gall, 1983; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1998; Suter, 2006). The process of conducting historical research has at its true core, the components of perusing documents of the temporal component being investigated, processing relics, and conducting interviews of actors present during the temporal component or sequence (Borg & Gall, 1983; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 1998). Historical research then portends to construct a temporally accurate and universally inclusive model of the event (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2003), historical research can accurately examine and attempt to confirm or deny hypotheses when appropriately designed and conducted. And according to Marshall & Rossman (1998) historical analysis systematically completed strengthens the reliability and validity of studies.

Data Collection Procedures

Historical analysis can be thought of as having four general steps in practice: define a problem, search and find appropriate historical sources, use the data to develop a summary, and present the findings (Borg & Gall, 1983; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

A similar procedure was followed for this study.

First, required institutional review board (IRB) forms were completed and submitted to the University of Houston-Clear Lake review board.

Second, exploratory research was conducted via library and Internet searches for historical data regarding the TCC in higher education thereby commencing and conducting a review of the literature. A list of libraries, and their associated databases searched included: The University of Houston-Clear Lake Alfred R. Neumann Library, the Clara B. Mounce Public Library – Bryan/College Station Library System, Texas A&M University Libraries, Fort Bend County Libraries, Austin Public Library, the Texas Legislative Reference Libraries, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the LBJ Library and Archive, the Legislative Reference Library of Texas and, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Townsend Memorial Library.

Tools utilized consisted of Internet repository investigation via the archives of The New York Times, the Texas State Historical Association and The Portal to Texas History as well as Internet searches on Google, Google: Books and Google: Scholar to (a) examine the history of the TCC, (b) to place assessment into the matrix of Texas higher education, and (c) to refine liberal education. Individual institutional catalog archives, digital and/or hardcopy, of several Texas HEI were examined, to include: Austin Community College, Blinn College, Lone Star College, Sam Houston State University, the University of Houston, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas Tech University, Texas A&M University, University of North Texas, Central Texas College, Angelo State University, Texas State University and McMurry University.

Third, the materials were evaluated by the researcher examining contents and where necessary additional primary and secondary sources were accessed. The data were

gathered and analyzed to determine themes. Once themes were developed they were organized and aligned within the temporal units which eventually became the chapters. All historical sources were evaluated to confirm external criticism, or the genuineness of the source, as well as to internal criticism, or the accuracy of the sources content (Borg & Gall, 1983; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Suter, 2006). Where available, primary studies and writings were used to include: documents, numerical records, and relics.

The collection of primary source material, as anticipated, was limited and consisting generally of either internal THECB documents or journalistic editorials and archived catalogs. Therefore, interviews were conducted as a secondary resource for the research design. Interviews of educational policy administrators with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, present and past members, Texas legislatures, and officials from public higher education institutions were conducted to provide relevant primary source data. Secondary sources were deemed necessary, because discoverable primary sources were limited.

In instances where questions regarding credibility of the source information arose, triangulation was utilized to investigate. Triangulation involves utilizing varied methods that have varying weaknesses (Singleton, Straits & Straits; 1993). Triangulation was also used internally by examining perspectives from members of differing perspectives such as; institutional, policy or governmental etc.

Fourth, data were synthesized and the final report prepared. Data were grouped into chronological order and a process timeline of events was constructed to distinguish categories.

Data Analysis Procedures

The process used in this study was a fusion of chronological and thematic processes in the following steps: (a) examining the chronological implementation and development of the TCC by the THECB, and (b) examining the current implementations of the TCC at State of Texas universities and community colleges..

The themes utilized included the impact of individual players such as governors, legislators and citizens as well as the robustness of the agency directing (or managing) the HEI in Texas.

This chapter provided detailed information concerning the selection of a research methodology, the collection of primary and secondary sources, and the investigation process used in an examination of the TCC. The focus of this chapter was on the state expectations rather than individualized institutional responses.

CHAPTER IV: ORIGINS

This chapter provides detailed information concerning the origins of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The focus of this chapter will be on the educational landscape which preceded the implementation of the TCC as well as the early years in the development of how the TCC would ultimately unfold.

In 1950, the TLC released a report which recommended the creation of a committee with a mission to streamline the management of the higher education bureaucracy in Texas (Ashworth, 2010; Valenzuela, 2000). The Texas Commission on Higher Education (TCHE) was this temporary commission. This temporary commission was created upon the recommendation of the Texas Legislative Council (TLC) which itself was “established by legislative act in 1949 and serves as the legislature’s research agency” (Jasinski, 2010, para 1). In the early part of the 20th century, higher education institutions (HEI) in Texas were directly managed by the Texas Legislature. This changed in the early 1950s as the Texas Legislature moved toward creating an organized body to directly manage the HEI in the State of Texas (Ashworth, 2010; Ashworth, 2011; “Chief Chit Chat”, 1958; “Lock named”, 1953; Maguire, 1964a; Maguire, 1964b; McMillan, 1953; Nutt, 2014; Staff Recommendations, 1997; Texas Commission on Higher Education, 1953; Valenzuela, 2000; White, 1955).

The Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System (CB:TCUS) would become the earliest version of what would eventually be the Texas Higher education Coordinating Board (THECB). In his charge to the members of the new CB:TCUS Gov. Conolly stated, “While the creation of this Board represents fulfillment

of one of my greatest aspirations, I can only suggest to you how you may determine your course... I would remind you that neither monumental buildings, nor winning football teams, nor spacious dormitories, nor expansive campuses, nor anxious administrators, nor ambitious plans ever taught a college student, Faculties teach... The greatest risk you face is an institutionalized system, with each college or university grasping for its own ends without regard to the needs of the people of the whole state, and perhaps without being aware of those needs.” (Connally, 1965, p. 1,2).

The Charge of the Light Brigade

The charge of this early commission on higher education was mainly focused on approving appropriation and spending requests at the state’s senior institutions and to stem any redundancy in services across the state (Ashworth, 2011; “Chief Chit Chat”, 1958; “College Tuition”, 1956; “Commission Asks”, 1954; “Commission Recommends”, 1958; “Ex-tracks”, 1954; “Faculty Raises”, 1958; Maguire, 1964a; Maguire, 1964b; Manitzas, 1958b; McMillan, 1953; “Short Snorts”, 1955; “Texas Commission”, 1957; Texas Commission on Higher Education, 1953; “Texas Western”, 1956; “Universities Receive”, 1956; Valenzuela, 2000). For an initial attempt to address the system of HEI within the State of Texas the TCHE could be considered a limited success (Maguire, 1964b). The TCHE was successful in that it did shift the recognized locus of focus into a more centralized location. Also, it enabled the legislature to keep the final say but be able to place a standing committee in the middle to deflect, when necessary, any angst from the public or institutions for the implementation of new policies.

Flagship Dominance

Often these issues focused on the University of Texas, and to a lesser extent Texas A&M, and the internal quest for these institutions to become nationally recognized flagship HEI and there-by often placing the UT leadership juxtaposed to a central authority in Austin (“Commission Asks”, 1954; “Commission Seeks”, 1958; “Education group”, 1958; Manitzas, 1958a; Matthews, 1968; McBee, 1955; “New Policy”, 1958; “Plan to limit”, 1958). However, the TCHE, the new Commission, was not given any authority to make changes, only to identify and study issues of concern to the TL or the TCHE within the realm of higher education (Ashworth, 2011; “Commission Asks”, 1954; Governor’s Committee, 1964; Maguire, 1964a; Maguire, 1964b). For example, approving new institutions to the state system, assess the mission of each senior institution, examining institutional level degree programs and coordinating budgets (Ashworth, 2011; Maguire, 1964a; Maguire, 1964b).

Short Changed

Having a successful commission whose prime directive was to stay current on the area of Texas HEI did not always work smoothly. For example, in 1963 the TCHE had sent the legislature a package asking for \$2,770,951 to directly supplement faculty salaries, but the Texas Legislature only approved \$1,500,000 (“College Funds Short”, 1962). Even once the temporary TCHE of 1953 was made permanent in 1955, it was granted insignificant amounts of statutory authority and could do little more than make recommendations based on reports (Ashworth, 2010; Maguire, 1964b; Texas Commission on Higher Education, 1955). The TCHE did approve a general college

curriculum for each of the senior institutions under its domain but this was a very minor component of the decisions (“Study Slated”, 1959). But, to provide an earlier example of the limitations of the TCHE, in 1959 the commission received a budget almost \$13 million below recommendations and in general, “education lost more than half of what was recommended as the bare minimums to put higher education in Texas on par with other states” (“Senate Dooms”, 1959).

Tracing the TCC Usage

The earliest document usages of the phrase core curriculum in Texas media relate to topics in the realm of primary and secondary education (grades K-12). In *School Sketches* (1949), a newspaper section from the *Austin Statesman*, there is a discussion of a seventh and eighth grade teacher who prefers to teach four subjects to his students rather than specialize in one subject. The first printed, and documented, discussion of the phrase “core curriculum” applied at the Texas HEI level may be credited to J.C. Matthews who was at the time, in 1933, the chairman of the Texas Teacher-Training Conference and would one day become a President of North Texas University (Matthews, 1933).

Matthews (1933) was calling for a specific set of courses designed solely for future teachers and administrators. For Matthews (1933) teacher colleges in Texas should be rated, or valued, by the quality of the product they produce. Matthews (1933) concluded that the best and most efficient method, among several he listed, was to develop not a set of specific classical courses which teachers needed but to develop courses specifically for teachers. Matthews (1933) contended that this teacher core

curriculum would; “abhor any semblance of a general curriculum” (p. 2). The teacher colleges in Texas, sometimes referred to as normal colleges, may have been the state of Texas’ specific catalysts for what would become the TCC.

Required Coursework

Historically, degree programs at the senior HEI in Texas were based on the requirements set up within the student’s major field of study. This meant that students generally needed to select their college major very early in their educational careers. Variations even between majors in the same department would often require additional coursework for students changing majors. Therefore, loss of hours counted toward the degree could become an issue for students who began their college studies in one department and then decided to change majors, and the impacts on the coursework required could be expounded if students changed colleges, within the same HEI.

There were general requirements placed on HEI when they conferred bachelor’s degrees by the Texas Legislature which changed over time. For an early example the “prescribed courses” required for a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin in the 1902-1903 catalog included only nine courses (see Table 1) (University of Texas, 1903). These courses should not be thought of as a core curriculum as they were merely courses deemed necessary for a graduate to have obtained.

*Table 1.
Prescribed Courses for Graduation with a Bachelor's Degree at the University of
Texas in 1902-1903*

Subject	Courses
English	2
Mathematics	1½
Physical Culture	1
Foreign Language	3
Natural Science (w/lab)	1
Political Science (males only)	1

Adapted from University of Texas, 1903, pp. 39-40.

Note, that only males were deemed needing a class in political science, since only males could vote in 1902. While it is interesting to note that females need not register for political science courses there is a bit more to this story. The University of Texas placed itself in the History of the State of Texas by quoting the preamble to an act of the Texas Legislature (TL) creating the University, “Whereas from the earliest time it has been the cherished design of the people...that there shall be established...an institution of learning...and to be so endowed, supported and maintained as place within reach of our people, whether rich or poor, the opportunity of conferring upon the sons of the State a thorough education, and as a means whereby the attachment of young men of the State...” (University of Texas, 1903, p. 15). However, there was also a specific section titled “Co-Education” where-in it was noted that, “The opportunities offered by the University in all its departments are open to both sexes on equal terms. The young

women have the advantage of daily conference with Mrs. Helen M. Kirby, Lady Assistant in the Faculty” (University of Texas, 1903, p. 22).

This chapter provided detailed information concerning the origins of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The focus of this chapter was on the educational landscape which preceded the implementation of the TCC as well as the early years in the development of how the TCC would unfold.

CHAPTER V: DEVELOPMENT

This chapter provides detailed information concerning the development of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The chapter begins with a shift in the committee charged with monitoring HEI in Texas and ends with beginning of the White administration in Texas Governorship.

Enrollment Surges

As more and more students poured into the Texas HEI following the end of World War II, due to migration from other parts of the United States and the beginnings of the Baby Bom where-in numbers in each statistical cohort grew rapidly, the reality that funding was going to become an ever more visible component of making that education accessible became an increasingly imperative issue (Ashworth, 1972; Ashworth, 2011; “College Tuition”, 1956; Curry, 1965; McCaleb & Delco, 1990; Maguire, 1964a; “Short Snorts”, 1955). By the 1960’s the growth in enrollments and projected future enrollments took center stage in the HEI legislation landscape in Texas as higher education funding became a constant point of discourse (McCaleb & Delco, 1990; Maguire, 1964b; “Texas Colleges Need”, 1958).

By 1964, the TCHE was asking the Texas Legislature for a \$240,300,000 budget for the 1965-1967 biennium (Morehead, 1964). According to Morehead (1964) a full 66% of that request was for “increased student load” (p. 6). The enrollments numbers were growing so quickly and beyond the scope of the current HEI to absorb locally that some students were refused admission, though probably “not many” (“Short Snorts”,

1964. p. 6). This limited space to have courses and an expanding demand from the public for space in Texas HEI was leading to a perfect storm of high demand and low supply.

Selective Admissions

At the turn of the 1960s Texas higher education was in a state of transformation. Gone were the days when most students would leave high school for rural, primary industry (Governor's Committee, 1964). A new student body needed to be trained and prepared for advancing technology (Governor's Committee, 1964). Some of the technologies that were developed in the 1960s include, "the first video game console...the first computer mouse...light emitting diodes...dynamic random access memory...and UNIX" (Oxford, 2009, section titles). The question of how best to respond to these enrollments, at the time, focused around the idea of limiting enrollment at universities to the upper echelon of Texas graduating high school seniors and relegating the bulk of remaining students who choose to attend a HEI to a junior college or trade school (Ashworth, 1972; Ashworth, 2011; Maguire, 1963).

Texas Higher Education Considers an Institutional Caste System

Maguire (1963) provides details of the plan proposed by Gifford Johnson, then Chairman of the Governor's Committee on Education Beyond the High School (GCEBHS), which proposed three levels of education and admission. The three tiers of Johnson's proposal included: first-rate education (at flagships like the University of Texas) for the top 15%, quality education (at other senior colleges) where the upper 35% would be admitted and finally academic training (at junior colleges or trade schools) for anyone else "desiring less emphasis on academic education" (Maguire, 1963, p. 5). This

idea of a hierarchical system of education will underpin the development of the TCC as the interplay of the tiers and the ideas of equality and reliability evolve temporally.

Junior Colleges

To this point, in the early 1960s, the junior colleges were considered a corollary of the secondary system of education and were governed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) which coordinates primary and secondary education in the State of Texas. The need to bring the entirety of the three tiers into one regulating process led the Texas Legislature to reconstitute the TCHE as the Coordinating Board, Texas College and University System (CBTC&US) in 1965 (Ashworth, 2010; Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965; Sanford, 1965a). Even though the CBTC&US was the brainchild of Governor John Connally, and he was largely responsible for getting the board created, he did not demur to their requests without a second thought. In 1965, the CBTC&US, having met only twice, sent the Governor a bill which Connally vetoed that was designed to restructure the Board of Regents for three senior HEIs because he didn't want to create more regents (Sanford, 1965b).

As previously discussed Gov. Connally sought to keep the power to drive higher education with the public at large rather than to the benefit of few institutions, "...we have come to regard each college or university as a separate institution, striving independently for success. In many cases regarded locally as a boon to the economy, it struggles to be all things to all people, willing to do almost anything that will assure its getting larger---larger in enrollment, larger in buildings, larger in number and level of degrees offered, larger in number of graduates, larger in number of alumni. Always it

strives to stand above its group in those visible evidences of growth. And it remains in constant danger of mediocrity as a result,” (Connally, 1965, p. 2).

Junior Colleges Join the HEI in Texas

For the first time the Texas Legislature moved to bring coordination of the junior colleges, instead of just senior institutions, into the commission charged with coordinating higher education (Sanford, 1965b). When the Governor’s Committee on Education Beyond the High School, charged by Gov. Connally, met they proposed several changes to enhance the structure of HEI in Texas. One of those recommendations that was, apparently, designed to assist in the integration of junior colleges into the scope of higher education was to give power to the Coordinating Board for:

Approving a basic core of general academic courses to be offered at all junior colleges during the first two years of collegiate work which, when transferred, would be accepted among member institutions of recognized accrediting agencies on the same basis as if the work had been taken in the receiving institution.

(Governor’s Committee, 1964, p.45)

In following this recommendation, the Texas Legislature, for the first time, included language directly tied to parity but designed to function in a system considered to be hierarchal. The Texas Legislatures charges to the CBTC&US included:

Develop and promulgate a basic core of general academic courses which, when offered at a junior college during the first two years of collegiate study, shall be freely transferable among all public institutions of higher education in Texas who are members of recognized accrediting agencies on the same basis as if the work

had been taken at the receiving institution. (Higher Education Coordinating Act of 1965, p. 30)

By creating tracking categories in which to place students, this plan revealed an undergirding thesis that assumes students can't really academically advance once they reach the HEI level. Restated, if you assume that freshmen can be placed into an appropriate "plan" to complete their studies on day one this does not allow for any growth once they begin college coursework. Thus, they are best provided services based on the intelligence quotient which they bring with them from high school. This leads to the sister issue of developmental education. It is quite interesting to consider the need for developmental education programs at the HEI level at all if one is willing to assume that students can't really academically advance once they reach the HEI level. In fact, the 1962 TCHE, based on that exact assumption, proposed that programs and classes in the developmental curriculum be ceased for all HEIs except three smaller institutions serving proportionately high numbers of minorities (Jones, 1963, Stanford, 1962).

In the Texas Standard, which was a publication of the Negro Texas State Association of Teachers, Dr. James B. Jones of Texas Southern University described how the State of Texas was failing to educate the students of color. He stated, "I am not at all pleased with the fact that the Texas Commission on Higher Education is recommending that remedial work at all institutions of higher learning be discontinued except at Texas Southern University, Prairie View, and Texas Western" (Jones, 1963, p. 5). This attempt to drastically reduce the services provided to students needing remediation could also be considered an indirect method for controlling the rising budgets that were crunching the

Texas budget by limited the spots available in HEI to those students most intellectually *worthy* of an education. It could also be accurately described as an example of institutional racism as the aforementioned colleges are Historically Black Colleges and Universities or have a majority of students of color.

By 1967, a large proportion of students were already enrolling in community colleges and junior colleges rather than senior institutions (Helton, 1967). According to John E. Gray who was chairman of the State Coordinating Board for Higher Education, "...the funds should be available where the most students are..." (Helton, 1967, p. 6). This led to a gap in the management of junior colleges and the ability of funds to pay for enrollments from the State of Texas (Helton, 1967). In 1967 the SCBHE changed fiscal policy so that each campus of a junior college could request separate funding (Helton, 1967).

If You Build It They Will Come

The discussion and need for new facilities to meet the needs of a growing population led to the development of a community college network even in the educational hinterlands of the University of Texas. Austin, TX is located in Travis County. As early as 1968 the then commissioner of the CB:TCUS, Dr. Jack Williams was urging the implementation of a community college in Travis County (Castlebury, 1968). Williams posited that the secondary schools in Travis County were not equipped to service the needs of a technical (workforce) training because those institutions were designed to teach rudimentary education not skills (Castlebury, 1968). Williams also maintained that senior institutions, like the University of Texas, couldn't offer technical

classes for the same reason, they were academic minded institutions based on advanced research not workforce training (Castlebury, 1968). Williams then reinforced the concept that the academic work must; “be based largely on a core curriculum of freshmen-sophomore work to be freely transferrable...” (Castlebury, 1968, p. A2).

In this scenario the senior institutions would be utilized primarily as research centers and the community college would be solely focused on teaching. Some smaller senior institutions, like Sam Houston State University, could have some programs at the research level and some programs that focused primarily on teaching. Funding for creation of the Austin Community College was actually voted on by the residents of Travis County in 1972 and in 1973 the college officially opened by enrolling 1,726 students (ACC, n.d.).

Junior Colleges and the Big Boys: Here’s Where the Fun Begins

1968 saw the landscape of Texas HEI change dramatically. The CBTC&US proposed a core curriculum to, “make two years at any public junior college equivalent to two years in any of the senior colleges” (Anderson, 1968, p. 2; Coordinating Board, 1968). This fundamental shift was designed to allow students attending junior colleges to easily transfer their coursework to senior institutions if they chose to continue their studies (“College Change Made”, 1969; Coordinating Board, 1968; “Junior Colleges Are”, 1968). It also, by design, moved specialized coursework to the junior and senior years and was often billed as way to allow students extra time to declare a major (Carr, 1968). This shift dovetails away from the previously discussed system of higher education where the HEIs were considered to be in a hierarchical ordering. In this

perspective all HEIs in Texas were considered to be providing the same level of rigor in their coursework. Trying to demonstrate that courses taught at different institutions, by different faculty and at different temporal points would lead to the development of assessment as means to demonstrate equivalency.

There were examples early on of senior colleges welcoming this change in curriculum (McMurry College, 1969). “McMurry College embraces the plan of transfer work from junior colleges as set forth by the Texas Higher Education Co-ordinating Board core curriculum plan” (McMurry College, 1969, p. 24). But, there were also examples of some senior institutions fighting the idea of equivalent curriculums (W. Delco, personal communication, April 14, 2016). Internally, within each HEI, the core curriculum changed the teaching landscape as faculty that had previously had sections filled to the gills with students saw their enrollments plummet in a year because their courses were not included in the core curriculum (McGuire, 1985). Faculty were often left to defend their courses and, in some instances, their respective departments for inclusion in the TCC (Eades, 1983; Gammage, 1984; Henry, 1983; Hook, 1949; Perrine, 1975; Ramsey, 1976).

The administrators of these HEI spent very little time publicly supporting these faculty and instead focused on the need for educational value. In *Dialogue* (1971) Dr. Gus Ferré stated; “our concern is to be what students want and need in terms of education...rather than protecting any present empire any department may have built...” (“Dialogue: Dr. Gustave”, 1971). Student desires were often divided but the majority seemed to agree on one particular aspect of the TCC, the perceived frivolousness of

foreign language requirements (Rogers, 1974). Some administrators were very vocal in their response calling for not only foreign language requirements, but Spanish (specifically) fluency in speaking and reading for all graduates (Liacouras, 1986).

Labeling the Core

Most of the curricula implemented in the early days of the TCC were based on blocks of academic areas: math and science, English and foreign language, social sciences, physical education. The contentions from each respective discipline that, of course, some of their courses should be included drove a change in the layout of these CC. An example of this new blocking schema is McMurry Colleges “experience areas” (Black, 1977). These “experience areas” included eight general skills that were more than merely a list of academic subjects (see Table 2).

The criteria for Experience Area 1 (think clearly) was often satisfied by taking either a logic or mathematics course (McMurry College, 1977). While McMurry is a private institution this list is reflective of other TCC that would follow in the public sphere. On the public front, the Texas Legislature (TL) did pass a course requirement bill in 1977 that raised the previously 6 hours of required History and Political Science to 12 by requiring 6 hours of free market economics (CSHB 1715).

Table 2.
McMurry College Experience Areas, 1977

Experience Areas
1. Developing the techniques to think clearly.
2. Developing communication skills.
3. Understanding religious traditions and value orientations.
4. Understanding contemporary society.
5. Understanding the natural sciences.
6. Developing skills in a language other than English.
7. Appreciating literature and the arts.
8. Understanding history and historical methods.
9. Developing physical skills and fitness.

Adapted from (Black, 1977, p. 15).

Spatially Densified College Comes to Texas

The system envisioned at the end of the 1960s to bring a HEI to within reach of virtually every Texas resident, came to pass in the 1980's. According to Kenneth Ashworth State Commissioner of Higher Education, by 1980, "we now have a public or private college, junior college or university within commuting distance of 99 percent of the population" (Jones, 1980, p. 6). Rep. Delco, chairwoman of the House Higher Education Committee agreed, "more and more people are demanding higher education around the corner" (Jones, 1980, p. 6). While this spatial vastness, or excess depending on the perspective, of HEI primarily impacted the Texas budget its implications on the TCC were direct in that as more students enrolled at community and junior colleges and

tried to transfer to senior institutions the result was more attention was brought to the unwillingness of some senior institutions to allow easy transfer of coursework (W. Delco, personal communication, April 14, 2016).

Required Coursework

In 1968 the CB:TCUS had released a policy paper detailing three core curricula for community and junior colleges (Coordinating Board, 1968). At this point there was a shift in the emphasis of the movement to create a CC in Texas from the CB:TCUS.

Unlike at senior institutions the CB:TCUS determined that enrollment at community colleges would be open, "...admission to appropriate curricula in the community junior colleges should be permitted to all who can profit from the instruction offered"

(Coordinating Board, 1968, p. 4). The CB:TCUS also then desired to have colleges in access to most Texans, "...the Coordinating Board believes that community junior colleges should be located within reasonable distance of all persons within the State who could logically benefit from attending these institutions" (Coordinating Board, 1968, p. 4).

The three CC detailed in the report were based on the degree sought by the student; Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science, Bachelors of Business Administration, Bachelors in Engineering, see Table 3 (Coordinating Board, 1968). Of the subjects required, physical education was not on the list for any degree, "courses in physical training...are excluded from the core curricula" (Coordinating Board, 1968, p. 7). When individual HEI began to develop their own CC, physical education was usually a required component.

Table 3.
Texas Higher Education Core Curricula 1968

	Subject	Major Field I Bachelor of Arts Degree in Arts and Sciences Bachelor of Science in Mathematics & Natural Science	Major Field II Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration (incl. Accounting)	Major Field III Bachelor's Degree in Engineering
a.	English Language Proficiency (i.e., freshman English)	6 hours	6 hours	9 hours
b.	Literature	6 hours	6 hours	
c.	Government (to meet state statute requirement)	6 hours	6 hours	6 hours
d.	History (to meet state statute requirement)	6 hours	6 hours	6 hours
e.	Natural Science A	6-8 hours Biological Science	6-8 hours Biological Science	8 hours Chemistry
f.	Natural Science B	6-8 hours Physical Science	-----	hours Physics
g.	Mathematics	6 hours	6 hours (college algebra plus sequential course appropriate to a business degree)	9 hours (analytical geometry and calculus)
h.	Foreign Language	For the BA degree: 12-14 hours in a single language For the BS degree: 6-8 hours in a single language		
i.	Humanities Electives: excluding courses in literature beyond b. above, also no more than 12-14 hours of foreign language may be used in h. and i. combined	6 hours	9 hours	3 hours (to satisfy ECPD requirements)
j.	Special Courses	-----	Economics: 6 hours Accounting: 6 hours	Engineering Mechanics 3 hours Engineering graphics: 2 hours

Borrowed from Coordinating Board, 1968, p. 8

By the 1970's individual HEI were still designing their own general degree requirements for all students being conferred bachelor's degrees (often these requirements included minimal components that were set by the Texas Legislature) and leaving specific programs of study to the individual academic disciplines. Texas Tech in their 1978-1979 catalog required six courses for all graduates at the bachelor's level (see Table 4). These course requirements should still not be considered as a core curriculum because they were based off of coursework required by the Texas Legislature and were not designed to serve as a basis for liberal education.

*Table 4.
Texas Tech University Bachelor Degree Course Requirements, 1978-79*

Requirements	Authority
History (American or Texas) 6 hours	Texas State Law
Political Science 6 hours	Texas State Law
Physical Education 2 courses	Texas Tech Policy

Adapted from Texas Tech University, 1977, pp. 72-73

Students attending Texas Tech University, for example, at this time were taking major program courses their first semester in college in degree plans based on their major field of study rather than completing a block of courses in liberal education (Texas Tech University, 1977). The 1978-79 curriculum for a B.S. degree in Geology called for a student to complete 15 hours both semesters their first year (Texas Tech University, 1977). Of these 30 hours the course sequence breaks down as follows; English - 6 hours, Chemistry – 8 hours, Math – 6 hours, Geology – 8 hours and Physical Education – 2 hours (Texas Tech University, 1977). These requirements were unchanged in the Texas

Tech undergraduate catalog through the 1989-1990 edition. However, other HEI in Texas began the move to more encompassing general curricula much earlier. The University of Texas at San Antonio had a list of general education requirements for undergraduates in their 1975-1976 catalog (see Table 5). Lists of this type could reasonably be considered a quasi CC.

*Table 5.
General Education Requirements at UTSA 1975-1976*

Subject	Hours
English and the Humanities	9
American or Texas History	6
Government	6
Foreign Language	9
Mathematics	4
Library Study ¹	1
Restricted electives based on major	15

Adapted from University of Texas at San Antonio, 1975-1976, pp. 70-71

These requirements at the University of Texas at San Antonio were relatively unchanged until the 1987-1989 undergraduate catalog, though they were later regrouped into three categories. The University of Houston implemented a new broadly categorized core curriculum with their Fall of 1983 cohort which included three stages of instruction; “basic skills, knowledge base and advanced skills, and knowledge integration”

¹ This library studies course was an introduction in how to find materials in the library.

(University of Houston, 1982, p. 17). Students enrolling in the Fall 1983 semester at the University of Houston then became the initial group to matriculate under the new core curriculum (University of Houston, 1982). The college maintained that there was a national trend at the time to utilize common blocks of courses in higher education (University of Houston, 1982). The Deputy Provost of the University of Houston also claimed that; “a college education should imply that a person has an understanding of the basic foundations of education, basic language and computational skills.” (University of Houston, 1982, p. 17). For the University of Houston, the necessary courses included some commonly included subjects as well as a couple of additions (see Table 6).

*Table 6.
Course Requirements for the Bachelor’s Degree at the Univ. of Houston 1982*

Subject	Hours
English/writing	12
College Algebra + Math/Logic/Statistics	6
American History	6
Government	6
Physical and Life Science	6-8
Social or Behavioral Science	6
Knowledge Integration	6

Adapted from University of Houston, 1982

This CC, from the University of Houston, required all students to specifically complete college algebra, perhaps the first HEI in Texas to require this. This was by

design and June Dempsey, an administrator from the University of Houston at the time, stated; “We are as concerned about a student’s math literacy as we are about his or her ability to use the English language...we chose algebra because it teaches the elements of logic and argument” (University of Houston, 1982, p. 17).

Perhaps the most interesting component of the University of Houston CC from 1982 was the inclusion of the six hours of Knowledge Integration courses which were specifically designed to provide “experience in analyzing criticizing and relating ideas from more than one discipline” (University of Houston, 1982, p. 17). These six hours were designed to be completed in the junior and senior years rather than as a block in the freshmen and sophomore years (University of Houston, 1982). A required component at the junior and senior level is an anomalous inclusion for a TCC at any time period (THECB, 1996). Once the Texas Legislature required that the transferability of the TCC needed to be equivalent between HEI the inclusion of a junior-senior year component didn’t fit well into the TCC mold. The University of Houston still kept the idea of Knowledge Integration in some of their coursework though, “ILAS 4350 ‘Senior Seminar in Liberal Studies’ is a knowledge integration course, with readings selected across disciplines and genres (natural science, social science, philosophy imaginative literature)” (Courses, n.d.).

This chapter provided detailed information concerning the development of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The chapter began with a shift in the committee charged with monitoring HEI in Texas and ended with beginning of the White administration in Texas Governorship.

CHAPTER VI: IMPLEMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

This chapter provides detailed information concerning the implementation of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The time period of this chapter begins with the administration of Gov. Mark White (~1983) and continues to the present. The chapter also addresses the development of TCC assessment which is reflective of the TCC development during this time period.

The Tide Flows in, the Tide Flows out, Twice Everyday Returning

In 1983 a maelstrom of external factors would ultimately be the harbinger of massive educational reforms through-out the nation as a whole and locally within the State of Texas. In 1980, President Reagan campaigned on a platform that called for lesser importance on education and even called for dissolution of the Department of Education (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). In fact, “The only curricular reform he (Reagan) advocated was bringing God back into the classroom with prayers said in school (Guthrie & Springer, 2004, p. 10). However, Reagan appointed a very pro-education scholar to the position of Secretary of Education, Terrel Bell (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). Bell charted the commission that would generate a report examining the state of the US educational system as the country neared what would eventually be the end of the Cold War (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

Henny Penny Has a Vision

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) released an open letter to the public and the Secretary of Education, the *A Nation at Risk* report (NARR). The NARR used one flowery turn of a phrase after another to drive the discussion on the

current state (in 1983) of education towards an agenda seeking massive educational reform. It would be hard to put a value on this one document, but its value to the side of the debate seeking education reform was priceless (Project on Redefining, 1985). One of the phrases that was often referenced was, “the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people” (National Commission, 1983, p.7). By design, this language was meant to instill a deep sense of looming crises to foster concrete and rapid change. What it did not do, was place the perspective of the authors into accurate context. They continue on in their treatise and began to explain their perspective.

The NARR notes that the Japanese made cars more efficiently than Americans, that the South Koreans had the most efficient steel mill and that the Germans were now considered to be better machinists (National Commission, 1983). The NARR continues, “These developments signify a redistribution of trained capability throughout the globe” (National Commission of America, 1983, p.8). Again, the NARR continues, “the world is indeed one global village” (National Commission of America, 1983, p.8). This supposed hallmark of educational research could alternatively be viewed just as an example of the early fears of the processes inherent to globalization. The correct context in which to place the NARR was as a discussion of the impacts of globalization on a nation-state, specifically in this case the United States. Globalization means that power will ebb and flow among nations, just like those illusionary tides of mediocrity in the NARR (Boyer, 1990; Evans, 1997; Sassen, 2003; Sassen, 2015; Weiss, 1997).

Plucking Chickens for A Living

If the groundswell of education reform was not already at the precipice following the Nation at Risk Report (NARR), it would soon be thrashed into a crescendo. The second factor to drive higher education change in Texas was the election of a new education governor into office in 1983, Mark White (D). Gov. White began serving in January 1983 and the NARR was released in April of that same year. The fervor for education reform grew, eventually Gov. White would appoint a well-known Texas businessman named H. Ross Perot to solve the education crisis in Texas.

Due in large part to the growth of interest in educational reform by the Texas, and American, people and to an even larger extent by the charisma and leadership of Perot individually, education in Texas was overhauled (Anderson, 1984; Chira, 1992; W. Delco, personal communication, April 14, 2016; Hobby & Tiede, 2010a; Hobby & Tiede, 2010b; G. Lewis, personal communication, April 20, 2016). Because Perot was a successful businessman and an information technology billionaire, he appreciated the future needs of a populace exposed to technology and therefore of necessity exposed to academic rigor (Chira, 1992). The White/Perot educational reform movement started at the primary and secondary levels of education but it also drove momentous change in higher education.

Perot was appointed by Gov. White to the Texas Select Committee on Public Education (1984) (SCPE), which took several months to study the state of education and make recommendations (Anderson, 1984; Chira, 1992). Then, Perot went on a whirlwind press tour, using his private jet, to push for his educational vision (Chira, 1992). Perot

also spent some of his personal money to make these changes possible through lobbying efforts (Chira, 1992). Most of the contested ideas were implemented at the lower education levels, but his vision seeded the idea of a more robust core curriculum at the higher education level (W. Delco, personal communication, April 14, 2016). Perhaps the best way to sum up the impact of the legislative changes that occurred during the Gov. White/Perot time is to consider one of the proponents and the loving praise heaped upon it, “Milton Goldberg, chairman of the national education task force that produced the ‘Nation at Risk’ report, called (it) the ‘hallmark for the nation’” (Hobby & Tiede, 2010b, para. 12) (emphasis mine). This flowed directly into the call for “fundamental change (which) must occur” in the Texas higher education system (Select Committee, 1987b).

I Think a Change, a Change, Would Do You Good

To understand the changes that were about to take place in Texas higher education, it is prudent at this point to take a step back and consider the recent changes in primary and secondary education. In 1981, HB 246 became effective in Texas public schools. HB 246 amended the § 21.101, Texas Education Code, to include 11 subjects which each individual school district was required to impose to create a “well-balanced curriculum”. These 11 subjects included: “English language arts, other languages, to the extent possible, mathematics, science, health, physical education, fine arts, social studies, economics, business education and vocational education” (Texas Education Code). HB 246 also added a new wrinkle in the curriculum requirement called “essential elements” which were to be developed by the State Board of Education (SBE) and required for districts to remain accredited (Bridgman, 1984; Technical Digest, 2010-2011).

These essential elements were designed to assess the “delivery standards expected of teachers” (Technical Digest, 2010-2011, p.9). The essential elements were eventually replaced in 1998 with the implementation of the TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills) which was designed to assess student knowledge (Technical Digest, 2010-2011). The TEKS are standardized requirements for each grade level and subject and are measured through the State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test (TEA, n.d.). These changes took place a year prior to the SCPE report which H. Ross Perot headed. But, the ideas of assessing curriculum through elements within the course content would be parlayed into the higher education arena. As would the concept of basing the assessment on teaching standards, what would come to be called learning objectives or essential learning outcomes/exemplary educational objectives, as opposed to measuring knowledge attainment.

Setting the Stage

In 1985 the 69th Texas Legislature (TL) created the Select Committee on Higher Education (SCHE) (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986; W. Delco, personal communication, April 14, 2016; HCR 105; THECB, 1996). The TL charged the SCHE to, “define the major issues in higher education and to develop concrete proposals to guide public higher education into the next century” (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986, p. A-6). In 1986 Gov. Mark White appointed Larry Temple as chairman of the Select Committee on Higher Education and the direction of the TCC shifted dramatically (Valenzuela, 2000). Temple came into the position with a perspective that the currently designed core curriculums were too inclusive of “professionalization...they are not broad-based enough” (Faulkner, 1986. p.

1). Temple's view of the TCC stated that "there are an awful lot of people who think higher education is a tool of the economy...my view is that the purpose of education is to educate, but it may be helpful to the economy" (Faulkner, 1986. p. 1).

This focus on these dual aspects now accepted for Texas HEI began to serve as a foundational assumption for reports, consider this comment from the SCHE executive summary, "Texas must look to its universities for new knowledge and for trained minds... assuring an education for all who seek it..." (Select Committee, 1987b). The SCHE noted that many other states were creating a direct correlation between HEI, state level economic progress and employment (Select Committee, 1987a). In May 1986 the SCHE engaged Coopers & Lybrand to conduct a management review of Texas higher education (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986).

Coopers & Lybrand Review the State of the State (1986)

Coopers & Lybrand (1986) submitted a report (CLR) to the SCHE reviewing the state of higher education in December of that year. The CLR report gives the purpose of the review as a quick exploration to examine current issues in Texas higher education with the possibility of "improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public higher education" (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986, p. A-1). The first conclusion of the CLR was not something most people wanted to hear. "Our principal conclusion: the diversity and rapid growth of the Texas system of public higher education are not being efficiently managed" (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986, p. A-2). The business model has changed the face of liberal education. But, many scholars and educational leaders have argued that the business model is not necessarily better than the forces inherent in liberal education founded on

academic freedom. According to Ashworth (1972) who would become a future Chairman of the THECB, “A Harvard University self-study (1962) found that government and industrial laboratories have not been able to supply ‘the creative activity that takes place most naturally in an institution where the arts, sciences, and letters are joined in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom” (p. 15).

The CLR placed the needed changes which the review recommended in the context of developing long-term goals that would place Texas strongly into the new century (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986). Still, acknowledging the drastic changes that were needed didn't make pleading the case for them easier at the time. “The State of Texas is at a crossroad with a multi-billion dollar state deficit, record unemployment, and uncertain expectations” (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986, p. A-6). In their investigation C&L were unable to find any established goals or agendas for higher education in the State of Texas. They did, however, note the existence of three commonly accepted strategies: state wide proximity to HEI, basis of education on workforce development, limited flagship centers (Coopers & Lybrand, 1986).

Perot's Ghost

The SCHE developed a component of the suggested policies proposed to develop Texas public higher education by strengthening the connection between funding and assessment, recall this is how Gov. White and H. Ross Perot were able to pass their primary and secondary education changes in Texas (Select Committee, 1987a; Select Committee, 1987b). According to the report of the SCHE the “public institutions of higher education should continually evaluate progress toward fulfilling their roles and

missions through the assessment of educational outcomes (Select Committee, 1987a, p. 29). The SCHE placed the onus of the assessment of higher education directly on the individual HEI, “public institutions of higher education should continually evaluate and assess progress toward fulfilling their roles and missions (Select Committee, 1987a, p. 47).

Then the SCHE used some fairly nondescript wording while charging the TL to move toward a TCC that became common parlance for future assessment in Texas higher education, “The Texas Legislature require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to ... and recommend exemplary educational objectives” (Select Committee, 1987a, p. 50). They then used the phrase exemplary substantive programs for the TL to use to provide incentive funding (Select Committee, 1987a). This is the first time the phrase exemplary educational objectives (EEO) was used in regards to the TCC, it was used in context as a general descriptor but evolved into the referred direct measure of assessment (see Appendix A).

Texas Charter for Public Higher Education

In 1987 the SCHE incorporated the CLR and, input from other stakeholders in Texas higher education, and released the Texas Charter for Public Higher Education (CPHE) (Select Committee, 1987a; Select Committee, 1987b). The Charter laid out six principles to direct the future development of higher education (Select Committee, 1987a). These principles were; “quality, accessibility, diversity, adequate funding, effective management and leadership” (Select Committee, 1987c, pp. 5-7). The CPHE then assigned tasks to the TL and tasks to the THECB specifically (Select Committee,

1987b). The CPHE placed the broad responsibilities of defining goals, providing funding, and maintaining accountability directly to the TL (Select Committee, 1987b). Three of the tasks assigned to the THECB are relevant to this study.

First, the THECB was tasked to “publish materials on admission policies, transferable courses among universities and community/junior colleges...and other information to assist in making decisions about higher education.” (Select Committee, 1987c, p. 9). This put the THECB in the direct line of maintaining TCC information, a change because up to this point each HEI managed and maintained their own CC. The second task assigned to the THECB was to, “develop and implement policies on the transferability of lower division courses among institutions of higher education” (Select Committee, 1987c, p. 9).

This is an auxiliary of the TCC, the common course numbering system was a tool utilized to make the equivalency of courses less contested between institutions. By requiring all freshman English courses to be numbered ENGL 101 it was harder, but not impossible, for senior institutions to argue equivalency of transfer credit. The last task assigned to the THECB was to, “develop guidelines for institutional reporting of student performance” (Select Committee, 1987c, p. 9). This requirement is the foundation for what would become assessment in higher education in Texas.

Intellectual Vigilantes

The CPHE also gave one very relevant task to colleges and universities, “to transmit culture through general education” (Select Committee, 1987b, p. 4; Select Committee, 1987c, p. 10). This seemingly innocuous statement actually presumes quite a

bit in the realm of education. First, this assumes that HEI have the capability of transmitting culture, or any component of a society that is intellectual rather than scholarly. Second it assumes culture can be transmitted between institutions and people or at least between people and people (faculty to student). Finally, it assumes HEI have a component, somewhere within the institution, that comprises general education. This last assumption is perhaps the most fascinating because other than a “liberal education” one of the most common synonyms for a core curriculum is a “general education” (Boyer & Levine, 1990; Fiske, 1978; Harvard University, 1952; THECB, 1996; Xin, 2004).

In the SCHE Report on Higher Education (1987b) the committee prefaced it’s work on the assumption that not only had HEI historically “transmitted culture,” but they also “impart and extend knowledge, and to teach and train students for vocations and professions” (p. 4). Interestingly, the SCHE report never quantified how institutions transmit culture. This construction of the premise that HEI should function as more than a collective of rote memorization courses is indicative of the fundamental change in what exactly the formal role of the HEI should be within society.

Technology was expanding and integrating rapidly into society during this time and the need for a populace that could function in a largely technologically based society moved to the fore-front of the education reform agenda. The purpose of the HEI was shifting, less to train future leaders and moving more to preparing a large portion of the populace to be able to be successful in the technologically laced society. Ashworth (1985) referred to the educators espousing the idea of equating memorization to the

higher order thinking which should be required at an HEI as “intellectual vigilantes” (p. 10).

In a scenario that brings our analysis back full circle to the early reform movements under Gov. White, the SCHE had one bullet item in their 1987 report executive summary discussing a core curriculum, and it reads, “strengthen baccalaureate degree programs, through a core curriculum. Put more emphasis on learning, less emphasis on athletics and extracurricular activities” (Select Committee, 1987b, p. 4). The report of the SCHE noted that traditionally, higher education was a tool for personal growth, or to impart knowledge but the technology currently transforming culture was going to make the demand for a highly capable workforce integral to Texas’ success in the future (Select Committee, 1987a; Select Committee, 1987b). Both of these tenants can be directly traced back to Perot’s work on primary and secondary education.

The First True TCC

The THECB and the TL established a formal TCC in 1987 by passing HB 2183 during the 70th Regular Session (TX Education Code § 51.305; THECB, 1996). HB 2183 impacted the 1/5 of Texas community college students who would transfer to a senior institution (House Research Organization, 1997; Texas Legislature Online, 1997). HB 2183 defined the core curriculum as, “the curriculum in the liberal arts, humanities, and sciences, and political, social, and cultural history...” (TX Education Code § 51.305; THECB, 1996. p. 4). This frame used to develop the TCC is also referred to as General Education or Basic Education (THECB, 1996). In this same legislative session, HB 2181 formally changed the name of the CB:TCUS to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating

Board (THECB) (TX Education Code § 51.305). HB 2183 required the THECB to charter a committee (1988 TCC-C) to review the TCC and make recommendations which they completed in 1989 (THECB, 1996). The 1988 TCC-C recommended that “there should be no attempt to prescribe a single core curriculum that would be uniform across all Texas colleges and universities” (as cited in THECB, 1996, p. 4).

The TCC-C 1988 concluded that there were common principles that are integral to any efficient learning process and as a result should be, of necessity, foundational for any CC (THECB, 1996). The TCC-C further recommended that each HEI create a CC of a minimum of 45 SCH, that each CC satisfy the exemplary educational objectives by component area (THECB, 1996). The THECB adopted a rule that all institutions of higher education would develop individual core curriculums and submit them by 1991, then re-evaluations would be due on a five-year interval beginning in 1996.

Center Stage in 1990

To facilitate original development of TCC by each individual HEI, the THECB orchestrated a state-wide conference on the continued development of the TCC in Houston, TX on July 20-23, 1990 (THECB, 1989). The participants were directed to consider their time at the conference as instrumental in advancing and improving the higher education system state wide. Though, in his opening comments Gov. White did say their task was not as onerous as the one faced in reforming education at the primary and secondary levels (THECB, 1990).

On the TL side the standing Committee on Higher Education of the Texas House of Representatives (HCHE) was holding meetings on various issues in the realm of

higher education, the TCC was one of those issues (House Committee, 1990). The entire HCHE was chaired by Rep. Wilhelmina Delco, but the subcommittee on the CC was chaired by Rep. Hunter, though Rep. Delco was a member of the committee (House Committee, 1990). Rep. Delco, was an African American leader and visionary with a strong commitment to bettering Texas education. The HCHE made six recommendations concerning the core curriculum; the first called for a clarification and further refinement of what the CC was to include (House Committee, 1990).

The second relevant recommendation, fourth on the list, was to; “insist that any core curriculum include a strong multicultural component” (House Committee, 1990, pp. 75-75). The idea of including multiculturalism was not only novel at the time, it was reflective of the current (post-modern, rather than modern) trends in higher education. This stage of planning would lead to the development of a second formal TCC. The intervening phase is the process of how the CC was implemented.

Implementation

Since 1991 all HEI in Texas were successfully in the process of implementing or developing a CC (THECB, 1996). The Texas Common Course Number System had been adopted by most, but not all, of the HEI and it was heralded as a major contributing factor of the successful implementation of a TCC (THECB, 1996). As the 5-year deadline approached the THECB asked each HEI to include three components in their reports (see Table 7). While the process was undertaken by all HEI the end results were often varied, “Some institutions have developed specialized courses to meet core curriculum

goals...this diversity in core curricula helps institutions tailor their general curriculum to the needs of their students” (THECB, 1996, p. 3).

Table 7.
THECB Inclusion List for HEI 5 Year Review (1995)

Component
Describe their core curricula; including their core philosophy;
Explain how they evaluated their core curricula; and
Report the results of that evaluation.

Adapted from THECB, 1996, p. 7.

The Second TCC

The THECB determined, in 1996, that the majority of the HEI in Texas used the CC to provide their students with education to, develop their ability to communicate, demonstrate organized thinking in varied disciplines, and expose them to the perspectives of others and other cultures (THECB, 1996). The THECB also noted in 1996 that while there were many similarities among the CC at Texas HEI, there were also varied mechanism to make each CC applicable to the unique institutions mission (THECB, 1996). Generally, this specificity which was directly tied to the mission of the individual institution could be construed as strength. However, while this diversity is admirable, and considered a value educationally, it created a barrier to the idea of an easily transferrable courses in a block TCC that could be functional statewide (THECB, 1996). This idea of free transferability had been the hallmark for the entire implementation of the TCC in the early days (see Chapter IV).

Specific Components of the Second TCC

The main focus of the legislation was to charge the THECB with creating a standard 42-hour core block that once completed at one HEI would represent the core equally if applied at a second HEI, even if the HEIs had differing requirements within the core block (“Hill College Courses”, 2007; House Research Organization, 1997; Kelley, 2006; THECB, 1996; Texas Legislature Online, 1997). Within a short five years’ time community colleges would even begin to use this law as a recruiting tool, pointing out to potential students the financial savings of lower tuition at community colleges versus the costs of enrolling at universities and the guarantee of full transferability (“Coastal Bend”, 2002).

With Great Power There Must Also Come Great Responsibility

SB 148 also amended the wording of § 51.305(b) to place the responsibility of developing the CC on the THECB, rather than where it had historically been, on the individual HEI. The saving to the State of Texas budget was noted even before the legislation was formally made law; “By fiscal 2000 to 2001, the reduction in duplicative courses taught could save the state over \$50 million per year” (House Research Organization, 1997, p. 2). The savings to the State of Texas budget and individual student budgets was to be achieved by the elimination of duplicate coursework when students transferred between Texas HEI. The Texas Legislature (TL) updated 19 TAC §§ 4.1-4.8 to specify how Texas HEI should frame their CC as well as 19 TAC §§ 4.21-4.34 to require THECB recommended transferability.

This would move the TL to adopt a 36-hour core curriculum that each HEI could use as a guideline to develop their own specific CC based on those proposed by the THECB (see Table 8). The TL allowed each HEI to select the remaining 6 hours, to total the 42 required for the TCC, from a similar list that included a subject called “institutionally designated option” (IDO) (see Table 9) (State of Texas, 1998, p. 11879). The THECB provided guidance on what might fall into this IDO category, “such courses may include computer literacy, kinesiology, health/wellness, interdisciplinary or lined courses, or other courses that address a specific institutional role and mission” (THECB, 1999, p. 7).

*Table 8.
The Second Texas CC (1996)*

Subject	SCH
010 Communication (English rhetoric/composition)	6
020 Mathematics (logic, college level algebra or above)	3
030 Natural Sciences	6
050 Visual/Performing Arts	3
040 other (literature, philosophy, modern or classical language and cultural studies)	3
060 U.S. History	6
070 Political Science	6
080 Social/Behavioral Science	3

Adapted from State of Texas, 2003, p.4164

Table 9.
The Second Texas CC – Remaining 6 SCH Options (1996)

Subject	SCH (up to)
011 Communication (composition, speech, modern language communication skills)	6
021 Mathematics (finite math, statistics, calculus, or above)	3
031 Natural Sciences	3
051 Visual/Performing Arts AND	
041 Humanities (literature, philosophy, modern or classical language and cultural studies)	3
080 Social and Behavioral Sciences	3
090 Institutionally Designated Option	6

Adapted from State of Texas, 2003, p. 4165

Life is Demanding Without Understanding

By the mid-nineties the perspective of how the TCC fit into the realm of higher education had shifted from an equivalency tool between junior and senior colleges to something with a deeper philosophical meaning, at least on the surface. Lamar University in Beaumont began describing its CC as a program, “based on the idea that certain common essential qualities are necessary for individual growth and professional advancement.” (“Curriculum Sparks”, 1995, p.2) Other members of academia also pushed for a “new” direction of the TCC toward preparing students to be successful in a more diversified democratic society rather than to focus on economic outcomes, developing a component in the Humanities was frequently mentioned (Veninga, 1991).

Other scholars maintain that the basis of a democratic society inherently requires a need for its populace to learn to be free (Ichilov, 2012)

Even the stature of a world class institution would not lessen the impact of the turmoil that spun around the courses included in each HEIs CC. Dr. Ray Bowen, then President of Texas A&M University in College Station, TX (TAMU), refused to recommend two multicultural course additions to the CC at TAMU, that openly he admitted he supported and thought would be valuable additions, because he feared the repercussions would be too intense on campus climate (Bean, 1995). Bowen was non-doubt considering a similar plan had failed to pass in 1992 at the University of Texas at Austin, “a much more liberal environment than College Station. The debate there was divisive, bitter at times downright ugly” (Bean, 1995, p. 2).

Why Do We Want (What We Know We Can’t Have?)

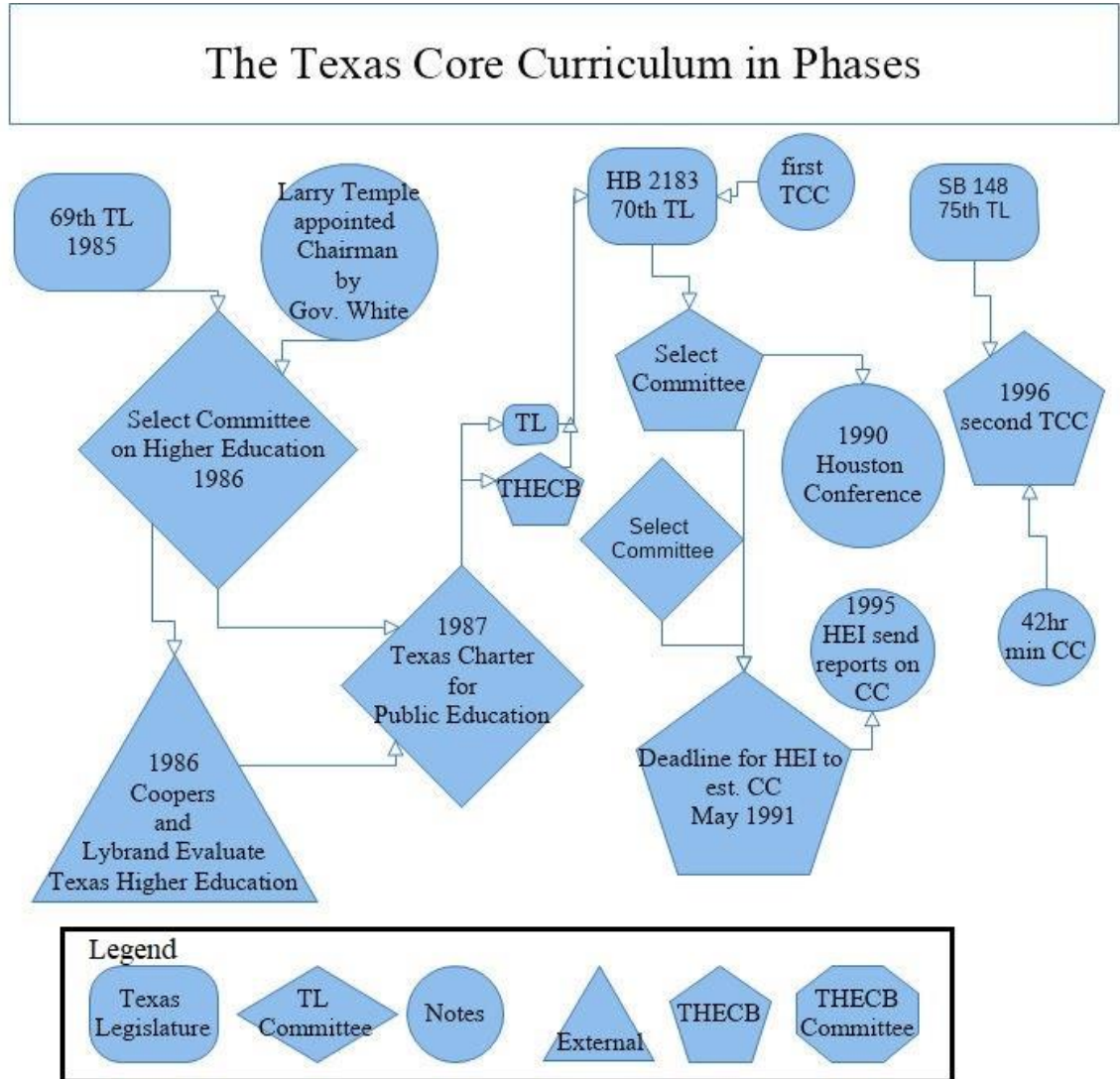
By 1997, the problem with senior institutions allowing courses to transfer under the TCC but not granting credit towards the degree for those courses was finally directly addressed by the Texas Legislature (“Bill Helps”, 1997; House Research Organization, 1997; THECB, 1996; Texas Legislature Online, 1997). Credit, or credit hours, are the basic unit used by most HEI in the United States of America to measure degree completion (Silva, 2013). One of the bill’s sponsors, Irma Rangel (D-Kingsville), said; “Our focus is on the students. We need to create opportunities—not obstacles—for them to earn a higher education” (“Bill Helps”, 1997, p.6).

Other legislators at the time also agreed on the need to provide support to students, rather than throw up hurdles for them to have to navigate (McCaleb & Delco, 1990). Delco, who would become the first African-American woman to be appointed speaker pro-tempore of the Texas House, was quick to ask; “how do you convince a young man driving a BMW and wearing fine clothes who’s making more selling an ounce of crack than he ever could being a professor at a university that he ought to get a Ph.D.?” (“Higher Education Should”, 1988, p. 3). The focus of this renewed legislation was yet another attempt by the TL to create a TCC which was freely transferrable among Texas HEI. While the process of developing multiple instance of a TCC for higher education had retooled the law to specifically address the equivalence of lower level undergraduate courses, there were still senior HEI making it difficult to transfer courses between State of Texas HEI.

Like a Bridge Over Troubled Water

THECB Staff (1997) made several recommendations both to the THECB and to the Texas Legislature to improve the standing TCC (Valenzuela, 2000). The first recommendation on the list was to keep the impetus for creating a CC on the specific HEI, but make sure they were aligned with the objectives outlined in 1989 and the Common Course Numbering System (CCNS) (Staff, 1997). The next major change in the TCC came in 1999 when the THECB released a guide for HEI to help them maintain their CC development, Core Curriculum: Assumptions and Defining Characteristics. For an illustration of the TCC development up to the 1999 revision see Figure 2.

Figure 2
TCC in Phases



Defining Characteristics

The THECB laid out six defining characteristics which should, at a minimum, inform any CC a HEI might develop (THECB, 1999). To specify importance, “reading, writing, speaking, listening, critical thinking, and computer literacy” were each listed and a brief description of the necessity of each component to the student in attendance at an HEI was discussed (THECB, 1999, p. 1). The THECB then took this idea a step further and laid the foundation for future expanses of the TCC. The THECB stated that, “it is imperative that these intellectual competencies be included among the objectives of many individual core courses and reflected in their course content” (THECB, 1999, p. 4). Next the THECB (1999) called for eight perspectives in the CC which help students; develop multicultural perspectives, become responsible members of society, be healthy, use technology effectively, become ethical, appreciate art, reason, and understand that knowledge is a web. Technology has been included as an important component of higher education since 1938 (see Chapter V) but even though what is meant by the word technology has changed several times it is still a common parlance, in the post-modern world, in the discussion of what is fundamental for inclusion in higher education (Quillen, 2016).

Exemplary Educational Objectives

The THECB (1999) then tied outcomes, named exemplary educational objectives (EEO) which were to be assessed to each of the six general categories previously used; communication, mathematics, natural sciences, humanities and visual and performing arts, social and behavioral sciences, and an option specific to the HEI. For the social and

behavioral sciences, as an example, there were 12 EEO (THECB, 1999). The items on these lists were learning outcomes, see Table 10, that were expected to align from the course down to the individual professor's syllabus.

Table 10.
Exemplary Educational Objectives for Social and Behavioral Sciences 1999

EEOs
1. To employ the appropriate methods, technologies, and data that social and behavioral scientists use to investigate the human condition.
2. To examine social institutions and processes across a range of historical periods, social structures, and cultures.
3. To use and critique alternative explanatory systems or theories.
4. To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
5. To analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the area under study.
6. To comprehend the origins and evolution of U.S. and Texas political systems, with a focus on the growth of political institutions, the constitutions of the U.S. and Texas, federalism, civil liberties, and civil and human rights.
7. To understand the evolution and current role of the U.S. in the world.
8. To differentiate and analyze historical evidence (documentary and statistical) and differing points of view.
9. To recognize and apply reasonable criteria for the acceptability of historical evidence and social research.
10. To analyze, critically assess, and develop creative solutions to public policy problems.
11. To recognize and assume one's responsibility as a citizen in a democratic society by learning to think for oneself, by engaging in public discourse, and by obtaining information through the news media and other appropriate information sources about politics and public policy.
12. To identify and understand differences and commonalities within diverse cultures.

Required Coursework

The specific 36/42 SCH from the second TCC remained unchanged. What did change was the inclusion of the measures for learning outcomes, called exemplary educational objectives (see Table 10). By designing universal outcomes for TCC courses the equivalency of each course, from institution to institution, and regardless of delivery method (face to face vs. distance) was to be considered equivalent across the State of Texas (DeLauro, 2016). This dual layering of the requirements of the TCC was specifically implemented by the THECB, “a core curriculum should be described and assessed by faculty and institutions in terms of basic intellectual competencies and perspectives, and of specific student outcomes, rather than simply in terms of specific courses and content” (THECB, 1999, p. 3).

At this point the THECB also readdressed the issue of transferability and the Texas Common Course Numbering System by emphasizing the requirement of TCC transferability between HEI, “nothing in this chapter restricts the authority of an institution of higher education to adopt its own admission standards...so long as it treats transfer students and native students in the same manner” (THECB, 1999, p. 11).

LEAP, SACS and UEAC the Ingredients for the Third TCC

After the second TCC was established several factors in the higher education landscape began to slowly generate a movement for change (THECB, 2015). The Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC) was created by the THECB in 2006 and it began work on researching possible improvements to the TCC (THECB

2015). Once the UEAC had completed their research, in 2009, it released a report which the THECB then, in turn, used to draw up a third TCC (THECB, 2015). Over the span of the ten years between the second TCC (1996) and the development of the third TCC the accrediting agency for HEI in Texas, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS), began to incorporate CC and assessment into the accreditation process for HEI (SACS, n.d., THECB, 2015). SACS core requirement 2.7.3 requires HEI to have a “general education component...that (1) is a substantial component of each undergraduate degree, (2) ensures breadth of knowledge, and (3) is based on a coherent rationale” (Southern Association, 20report12, p.19).

The new TCC was based heavily on concepts “developed by the Association of American Colleges and Universities LEAP initiative” (AAC&U) (“Tarleton”, 2014, p.5). The TL, THECB, administration at each HEI and faculty at each HEI found this system cumbersome. A new policy expectation implemented by SACSCOC also required HEI to include the, “assessment of student learning outcomes at the program and course level...(in)...every institutional effectiveness plan (THECB, 2011, p. 8). LEAP has been widely integrated, not only in Texas HEI among both community colleges and senior institutions (O’Sullivan, 2009). However, LEAP has been criticized by higher educators as being merely a result of an organizations (the AAC&U) desire to locate itself as necessary within the realm of education (O’Sullivan, 2009).

I Love It When a Plan Comes Together

The UEAC set a mission to develop a more robust but streamlined TCC (THECB, 2011). The second recommendation of the UEAC, the first relevant to our discussion,

was to “establish six core curriculum objectives” (THECB, 2011, p. 2). These six core objectives, [Table 10], which were to be measured in certain core curriculum courses as set by the local HEI, included; “critical thinking skills, communication skills, empirical and quantitative skills, teamwork, social responsibility, personal responsibility” (“SFA Board Approves”, 2013, p.16; THECB, 2011, p. 2; THECB, 2015, p. 5).

Table 11.
Six Core Curriculum Objectives 2011

Objectives

Critical Thinking Skills to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information.

Communication Skills to include effective written, oral, and visual communication.

Empirical and Quantitative Skills to include applications of scientific and mathematical concepts.

Teamwork to include the ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

Social Responsibility to include intercultural competency, civic knowledge, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities.

Personal Responsibility to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making.

Adapted from THECB, 2011, p. 2

The fourth recommendation of the UEAC was to, “map core curriculum objectives to foundational component areas” (THECB, 2011, p. 3). The concept here is to require at least three, though often four, of the course objectives, see Table 11, be assessed in courses under each component area (THECB, 2011). Each component area has a minimum set of objectives, but each HEI may increase that number (THECB, 2011). The four core objectives required to be assessed for a World Regional Geography course, for example, are, “critical thinking, communication skills, social responsibility and personal responsibility” (THECB, 2011, p. 15). This information is also articulated in the TL code Administrative Code Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter B.

*Table 12.
Core Objectives and Component Areas Map 2011*

Foundational Component Areas	Core Objectives					
	Critical Thinking	Communication Skills	Empirical & Quantitative Skills	Teamwork	Social Responsibility	Personal Responsibility
Communication	R	R	O	R	O	R
Mathematics	R	R	R	O	O	O
Life & Physical Sciences	R	R	R	R	O	O
Language, Philosophy and Culture	R	R	O	O	R	O
Creative Arts	R	R	O	O	R	O
American History	R	R	O	O	R	R
Government/Political Science	R	R	O	R	R	O
Social/Behavioral Science	R	R	O	O	R	R
Institutional Option	O	O	O	O	O	O

Borrowed from THECB, 2011, p. 15
Note: R = required, O = optional

Why Assess?

One of the questions that this research attempted to answer was why assess in higher education? Assessment in higher education can be considered in two general methodologies. First, in a course specific (often referred to as course level) setting faculty develop objectives which they hope to profess during the semester/term and at the end somehow utilize an instrument of their own choosing to measure success (Miller & Leskes, 2005). Second, is an institution or department level assessment which is completed to satisfy external agencies, such as SACS (Miller & Leskes, 2005). The first method can be used in the second method if the system is designed in such a way that allows for it. In some cases, institutions and/or departments institute their own instruments to measure successful learning outcome learning. It is in this situation where some faculty perceive infringement of academic freedom.

Now that we near the end of this research it might behoove us to reconsider this question of the purpose for assessment in higher education. As the UEAC succinctly put it, “the purpose of assessment is for institutions to discover, document and seek to improve student attainment of the six Core Objectives” (THECB, 2011, p.18). Texas higher education institutions are expected to serve the broader masses; therefore, assessment is critical to establish the continued relevance of the HEI in their place in our post-modern society. (Bok, 2013; Laird, Niskode-Dossett, & Kuh, 2009). Transparency has become a catch phrase in modern parlance, but perhaps that is the best reason to

assess in higher education, so that the proper place of higher education remains valued by all Texans.

This chapter provided detailed information concerning the implementation of the common curriculum in Texas (TCC) higher education. The time period of this chapter began with the administration of Gov. Mark White (~1983) and continues to the present. The chapter also addressed the development of TCC assessment which is reflective of the TCC development during this time period.

CHAPTER VII: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides detailed information concerning the origins of the common curriculum in Texas higher education. This chapter provides a discussion of the TCC and traces a brief history of its origins, development and implementation and assessment. Lastly, this chapter discusses the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, areas of potential future research, and the conclusions reached by the educational researcher.

Summary of Findings

The TCC has evolved and morphed over the span of 70 years or more through a process that never seemed to achieve its basically simple true objective of making an English 101 course taught at San Jacinto College unequivocally equal to an English 101 course taught at the University of Texas at Austin.

The first stage of the research was to identify the primary purpose for the initial development of the TCC. Initially, junior colleges were managed by the TEA and the structural redesign which brought them under the umbrella of Texas Higher Education was the initial point where a set block of classes to be completed in the first two years of college was deemed necessary. This set block developed, over time, with the courses the TL deemed necessary as the origins of a TCC.

The second stage was to determine how the TCC was coordinated and implemented. The TCC evolved over several iterations as more and more legislation and specificity of requirements were implemented to balance the equality of the first two years of college across all HEI in the State of Texas. The ever-present existence of

resistance from faculty at the flagship institutions in Texas to equality of coursework maintained the necessity of reforming and updating the TCC and its legislation and governance.

The last stage was to place the TCC into context with the postmodern strategies of assessment in Texas higher education. Because the early iterations of the TCC always lacked complete acceptance, assessment procedures and requirements were developed to track the utilization of the TCC. As some HEI began to implement assessment on a general scale regulatory bodies like SACS began to incorporate assessment in the institutional review process. Once SACS began to include assessment formally, the requirements for individual assessments began to evolve over time. Each of the evolutions of assessment tended to become more rigorous.

Origins

The history of the TCC developed over most of the latter half of the 20th Century. The TCC as it stands in the post-modern educational world of Texas bears very little resemblance to the version that was first prescribed in the early days. From the beginning, the Texas Legislature designed a few courses that were deemed necessary to every student earning a bachelor's degree at a Texas HEI. This core within the core has remained through the various machinations the TCC experienced. This core within the core consists of four classes, two History and two political science. Developed initially as specific required coursework by the TL, once becoming labeled formerly as a TCC, it was designed to be succinct and a specified block of coursework that would facilitate easy transfers from HEI to HEI.

In some ways it could be argued that the select faculty and administrators of those few senior institutions refusing to accept parity in their course with the “lower” community college faculties have heaped all this onerous assessment workload onto the entirety of faculty of Texas HEI because of their personal pride. From humble, if almost nonexistent, beginnings as the requirement to take a couple of civics courses the TCC have vastly expanded beyond their initial borders. Today, in the post-modern higher education landscape of Texas, the TCC has become less of a core and more of a mantle. A core is a small inner center, today's TCC comprises nearly one third of the expected coursework which a student will complete at the bachelor's level (THECB, 2011).

Rather than a core, it might just as well be called a mantle. Perhaps it is best described as a Common Mantle since it is very broad and not focused? But, it has also become less common and more individualized per HEI. So, to keep the name common wouldn't be right. Today's TCC is better described as an individualized shared mantle of academic coursework. And, a phrase like “Individualized Shared Mantle of Academic Coursework” (i-SMACK) would never get confused with the phrase “Common Core.” The mass the TCC has become, let us exclude the assessment component and just focus on the coursework, is no more a common core than an apple seed would be an apple core.

Limitations

This research was limited by temporal constraints, though it was conducted over a span of three years. Fiscal limitations also limited the scale and scope of the primary sources distribution which were not accessible digitally. While, early on during the research, some funding was available and access to spatially distant sources of

information were available there was a limit placed on the distance and volume of this information.

Some of the firsthand primary accounts are also limited by memory of the interviewee. As a narrative research design this research was also limited by the general limitation of personal accounts and recollections. Even narrative accounts dated in close proximity to the subject event date can be limited by bias, such as in editorials submitted to a newspaper. Also, there is the qualitative nature of accounts generated where one phrase may be referenced but was taken out of context initially and therefore that loss of context remains. Efforts were made to limit this limitation and, in instances where requested, copies of this manuscript were provided to interviewees for review.

The study, by design, focused on the State of Texas. This limited the research to only a unit of analysis of one state. Though the initial design included a comparative component, this was not practical based on the limitations previously discussed. The study also, specifically by design, focused on the HEI in Texas. Therefore, the study is not comparable to core curriculum analysis conducted at the primary or secondary education levels.

Potential Future Research

This study did not examine the comparative development of the TCC with those of other states. There is considerable literature available to allow for an analysis contrasting not only core curricula at the level of higher education by state, but also by HEI Carnegie level. A potential research project could focus on comparative core

curricula at other senior level institutions. Also, a rich study could be conducting comparing public and private institutions.

Another area of possible research would be to examine the concept of the core within the core. This research did not address the common courses common to most core curriculums at HEI. This could be done with Texas, or also as a comparative analysis nationally. An examination of CC as a temporal snapshot, a specific year, could provide illumination to the courses that are truly considered to be “core”. Also, a comparative examination investigating regional, perhaps by accrediting bodies, emphases within core curriculums would be interesting.

There was some contemporary evidence of student transfer issues, but most of it is second-hand accounts from HEI administrators or Legislatures (“Students to Discuss”, 1972, p. 1; Watkins, 2017). Further research could examine and investigate personal accounts of transferability issues. Especially, with an objective to examine if the majority of issues were attributable to changes in articulation agreements, lack of advising or advising errors.

Implications and Conclusions

The reasons for the TCC are constantly evolving. In fact, the TCC may actually be considered an ideal reflection of the ebb and flow in movements in Texas higher education. Each new direction, each shift in focus, was ultimately driven by some external force. Forces from surging enrollments, to high budget deficits help to provide catalysts that would work together to shape the future of the idea that is the Core Curriculum.

This chapter provided detailed information concerning the origins of the common curriculum in Texas higher education. This chapter provided a discussion of the TCC and traced a brief history of its origins, development and implementation and assessment. Lastly, this chapter discussed the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study, areas of potential future research, and the conclusions reached by the educational researcher. This research has shown how individual players, like H. Ross Perot, acted as a force to change K-12 education but the momentum was so great the wave of change spilt over into higher education. It has also shown how the TCC started from meek beginnings and evolved into the mass it is today, over time it is a visualization of how little has changed

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APPENDIX A: CORE CURRICULUM OR GENERAL EDUCATION

This is the first usage of the phrase “exemplary educational outcomes” (SCHE, 1987a).

CORE CURRICULUM OR GENERAL EDUCATION

A reported problem in Texas higher education is that, compared to national statistics, the State's public institutions require of its undergraduates a significantly lower number of hours in liberal arts general education than the number of hours many other states—and institutions considered to have strong baccalaureate programs—have found it proper to require of their undergraduates.

We believe that, in order to strengthen Texas' baccalaureate programs, changes must be made to the State's undergraduate curriculum requirements. Students must be taught not only how to think, but how to learn. They must be taught how to communicate what they learn clearly and concisely, whether in speech or in writing. They must be given what will serve them well for a lifetime: a thorough grounding in the arts, humanities, sciences and in political, social and cultural history.

The Committee recommends that:

- The Texas Legislature require each public college and university to submit to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board a statement of rationale and objectives of its core curriculum and the specific content of that curriculum which all of its undergraduates are required to complete prior to receiving their associate or baccalaureate degrees and plans for future changes in the core curriculum;
- The Texas Legislature require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish and staff an advisory commission of distinguished members to study the statements with consultation from faculty and recommend **exemplary** educational objectives which each two-year and senior college or university may, respectively, seek to achieve for all of its students through a new or revised core curriculum, and that the advisory committee recommend the minimum number of semester hours which each two-year college and senior college or university may consider requiring each of its undergraduates to complete prior to graduation;
- The Texas Legislature provide incentive funding for institutions establishing appropriate objectives for their core curricula and **exemplary** substantive programs to achieve those objectives; and
- The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board be authorized to require institutions to review and to consider revising their core curricula at appropriate intervals and to report the results of those reviews to the Board.]